

haunt our backyard. On 62 nights at least during these 5 months, the birds were in our area for periods varying from half an hour to two hours or more.

The young bird's favourite perch was the tip of a truncated, upward-pointing frond of a 40-foot coconut tree. Generally it used to sit there, calling from time to time, waiting for the parent to come and feed it.

The note most often uttered was a loud, rather querulous, nasal *kweng*. This would be repeated 2-6 times in 60-120 seconds, followed by 5-10 minutes of silence. Occasionally the young bird would be silent for as long as 30 minutes.

Variations such as a sharp *m-yóom*, *m-yóon*, *m-yóong*, *koom kyoom*, *kweyoong*, and a very brief *méwm* were often uttered, some of them highly suggestive of impatience and annoyance.

When the adult came, the young one used to utter a series of sharp, but low, *kwey-kwey-kweys*, but this was only in the earlier days. Later on, the only clue to feeding was the

ghost-like form of the adult flitting to and away from the juvenile's perch. Throughout the period feeding was an absolutely silent and quick process. The adult in attendance never uttered any call-notes except towards the end of the period (September and October), when it appeared as though the juvenile was learning to produce the characteristic adult note. Elsewhere in the city the adult's voice could be heard frequently throughout this 5-month period as during other parts of the year.

After the 27th of October, 1977, the juvenile's peculiar call-note was never heard in our area. But on 1-i-1978 I heard it in another part of the city. My son, who is also very familiar with this call-note, wrote that he had heard it in December (1977) at Rourkela (Orissa). Therefore, it may be presumed that the juveniles of the two races, *N.s. lugubris* and *N.s. hirsuta* utter the same kind of food-calls.

I have made fairly satisfactory recordings of these notes on tape.

24/1337, BEHIND G.P.O.,  
TRIVANDRUM 695 001,  
April 27, 1978.

K. K. NEELAKANTAN

#### 8. NORTHWARD EXTENSION OF THE RANGE OF THE SOUTH INDIAN BLACK BULBUL *HYPSPETES MADAGASCARIENSIS* SYKES

On 15th August 1977, Humayun Abdulali, J. S. Serrao the Society's Librarian, and the author, spent a delightful day motoring through some of the most wonderfully scenic country in north Thana District, not far from Bombay. We travelled along the Agra Road until Ghoti, where we branched off westwards, passed the Vaitarna Reservoir, and then through Khodala to Suriamal at the top of

the Ghats turning south to Wada to rejoin the Agra Road at Bhiwandi.

Between Vaitarna and Suriamal, we saw a party of birds flying to a small mango by the road along the cultivated hillside. At first sight they looked like Blackheaded Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*). Through glasses we counted 11 birds moving about a tree—a flock of blackbirds!? Perplexed, we walked nearer and

as the birds flew across the road and settled again, we got excellent views of their slim grey bodies, scraggy blackcrested heads, orange-red bills and legs, and slightly forked tails—a flock of Black Bulbuls (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis ganeesa* Sykes)!

According to the books, the northernmost record is from Matheran. H.A. tells me that one was seen by Sálím Ali at Bhimashankar (on the main axis of the Sahyadri Range) on 8th September 1948, when they had visited

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the place together. He also noted a small party in a forest beat on the Pen-Khopoli road (east of Karnala) on 26th December 1965. Nesting records from Khandala by McCann and Navarro have been published (1945) (JBNHS 45:241) and it is common at Mahableshwar.

The present record extends the accepted range of the species northwards by approximately 90 km.

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9. COURTSHIP SONG AND DISPLAY OF THE WHITETHROATED  
GROUND THRUSH *ZOOTHERA CITRINA CYANOTUS*  
(JARDINE & SELBY)

During the non-breeding months the White-throated Ground Thrush is quite frequently seen rummaging among the litter of the forest-floor, not much concerned about the presence of the birdwatcher. But a distinct change of mood occurs as the breeding season approaches. A bird may sometimes be seen singing from a bare high perch, but most often they become extremely shy and difficult to spot though the presence of numerous individuals evident from the rich lovely song which is a characteristic sound of a morning in April and May in the evergreen jungles of Mahableshwar, where most of my observations have been made. In high leafy or moss-covered branches of jambul the bird's chestnut and slate-blue coloration camouflages it surprisingly well. The voice has a ventriloquial quality

which makes accurate location difficult, and the cautiously approaching birdwatcher usually sees the exasperatingly elusive and audience-shy songster only when it flies from its perch for a more private location to resume its serenade.

Singing from such well-concealed positions the male sometimes assumes its peculiar courtship display—probably the reason why the display is so seldom observed. I have been lucky enough to see it on a few occasions, invariably when the female was somewhere near. I give a composite description from the notes sent by me to Dr. Sálím Ali on these occasions.

The normally spruce upright-perching bird bows forward with wings drooping limply. The neck is stretched far forward horizontally